

Selling Smarter at Garage Sales

Contributed by Sean Copeland
Thursday, 13 September 2007
Last Updated Sunday, 27 January 2008

Be more organized, sell more, and be just plain better at having your next yard sale with these great tips:

1. Your yard sale inventory is right under your nose, you just have to find it. A few weeks before your your garage sale, search closets and cupboards, bookcases and your basement for yard sale finds. The easiest way to decide if you should to sell an item is if you haven't cooked with it, worn it, displayed it, used it or read it within the last year.
2. Find someone else on your street or just around the corner that would also be interested in having a yard sale the same day as you. You will find that a two-family yard sale will get twice the traffic and therefore quicker sales.
3. Once you have marked an item for sale don't suddenly change your mind! Store your yard sale inventory in black plastic garbage bags or boxes with lids so that you aren't tempted to look at it and possibly change your mind.
4. Learn about what other people do for their yard sales. Read the yard sale advertisements and some time visiting neighborhood sales for general pricing and ideas.
5. Check with your municipality before having your yard sale because some jurisdictions require a permit, or limit the number and timing of yard sales.
6. Choose a day to have your garage sale and stick with it. There's little sense in extending your yard sale beyond one day because there is a point of diminishing returns. Sitting around at 4:00 p.m. on day two watching the last few pieces of mismatched items get picked up isn't worth the few pennies that may or may not come your way.
7. Have a strategy for what you are going to do with items that don't sell. Many charities will pick up all unsold items, so call around and try to schedule a pickup for the end of your garage sale day. If you can't find someone that will do pickups then be prepared to box items up and deliver them yourself to a charity who's willing to take them. Just make sure that whatever you do your items don't end up back in the house.
8. The true secret to a successful yard sale is traffic, so advertise! The more people that you can get to walk through your sale the more you will sell. Lots of cars parked on your street tell yard-sale cruisers where to find you. You'll also find that if you're busy enough buyers won't leave without that special item they've had their eye on because they fear that someone else will take it before they do.
9. Consider spending a few dollars on a newspaper ad. Most local papers offer special discounts for garage sale advertisements and free signs. Make sure that you watch what words you place in your advertisement. Mention highly desirable items that you might have such as furniture, baby items, or garden tools, but don't waste your money on "miscellaneous" because if you are having a garage sale people already assume there will be some miscellaneous items.
10. If you want to keep those fanatic bargain hunters from arriving at your house at 5 a.m. then make sure to include a notification to that extent in your ads such as "No earlybirds!".
11. Using a computer to make lots of signs can help. Neon colored poster-board and dark lettering works best, and make sure that the directions to your yard sale are big. You should test to see if you can see your signs from about a block away, because otherwise you are just advertising to your neighbours. Consider placing a sign at every corner between your house and the nearest main road to help guide traffic to your sale.
12. Prep your items for sale. Remember, even though it might be junk to you if it looks clean and tidy it might be a great deal for someone else. Run dirty dishes and glassware through the dishwasher or wash them by hand. Try cleaning all of the clothing you wish to sell and hang it on hangers to get yourself a much higher price for your items.
13. Make sure to price everything! From my experience has shown me that although price haggling is part of the yard sale scene there is always people with a shyer nature that would rather just know the price. Buyers are also more likely to buy when they know the price is in their range and besides, a front yard is not the place to have to come up with a price for every little item you want to sell.
14. Remove everything that's not for sale from wherever you've decided to have your garage sale from whether it be the driveway, garage or carport. If for some reason you can't then cover not-for-sale items with sheets or tarps so that you

won't have to explain what's not for sale to every other customer.

15. Setup some tables or risers of some sort to place small items on so that people can more easily view them. Display books with their spines up in shallow boxes for easy shopping. Use signs to help identify what and where merchandise is. Layout a heavy gauge extension cord to operate and test electronics for customers.

16. Prepare your yard and your items with safety in mind. Remove anything that can be tripped over or possibly hurt someone. If you have any pets, keep them inside because that dog of yours might just deter some of your potential customer. Examine toys and electronics for potential hazards and if you find any throw it out.

17. Grab something to store some change in and all of the cash you bring in from your sale. Have at least a few small bills and a handful of coins to help give your customers proper change.

18. On the day of the sale don't just sit there get up and talk to people. Comment on cute children, bumper stickers and T-shirt slogans. Be happy and share lots of information about that wonderful item that you love and adore but no longer want anymore. You will help create enthusiasm and make sales and possibly meet neighbors you never knew about.

19. Make sure that you have at least two people (staff) looking after your yard sale, but more is better. One person can look after the cash and keep an eye on everything from a distance. Leave the selling to the most enthusiastic person.

20. Offer FREE coffee to everyone because they'll truly appreciate it early in the morning. If you have children then get them involved and entrust them with something like a donut concession. If people are drinking and eating then they are sticking to your sale and most likely buying.

21. Be considerate to all of your neighbors and make sure to clean up everything after the yard sale and remove all your signs.

22. Register at eBay.ca and start selling high ticket items that you might get more money for at online auction. If you are unsure about selling on eBay then let me sell your items for you. Just fill out the [Sell your items form](#) by clicking here.